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STAFF WRITERS Susan Du, Hannah Jones
COPY CHIEF Bridgette Reinsmoen
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CLUBS EDITOR Erik Thompson

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Jerard Fagerberg, Jay Gabler,
Tony Libera, Michael Madden,
Erica Rivera, Sheila Regan

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Amy Gee, Alma Guzman,
Lucy Hawthorne,
Samson Melkamu, Shelly Mosman,
Bobby Rogers, Tony Nelson,
Colin Michael Simmons

Art

ART DIRECTOR Emily Utne
LAYOUT EDITOR Shelby Lano

Production

DESIGN MANAGER Maria Grzywa

Publisher
Mary Erickson

Advertising

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MARKETING DIRECTOR Holly Hunt
MARKETING COORDINATOR
Sarah McAllister

Business and Administration

FINANCE MANAGER Bernadette Botoshe
STAFF ACCOUNTANT Du Nguyen Ho

City Pages

650 3rd Avenue South, Suite 1300,
Minneapolis, MN 55488
PHONE 612.375.1015 FAX 612.372.3737
E-MAIL adinfo@citypages.com
CITY PAGES ONLINE www.citypages.com
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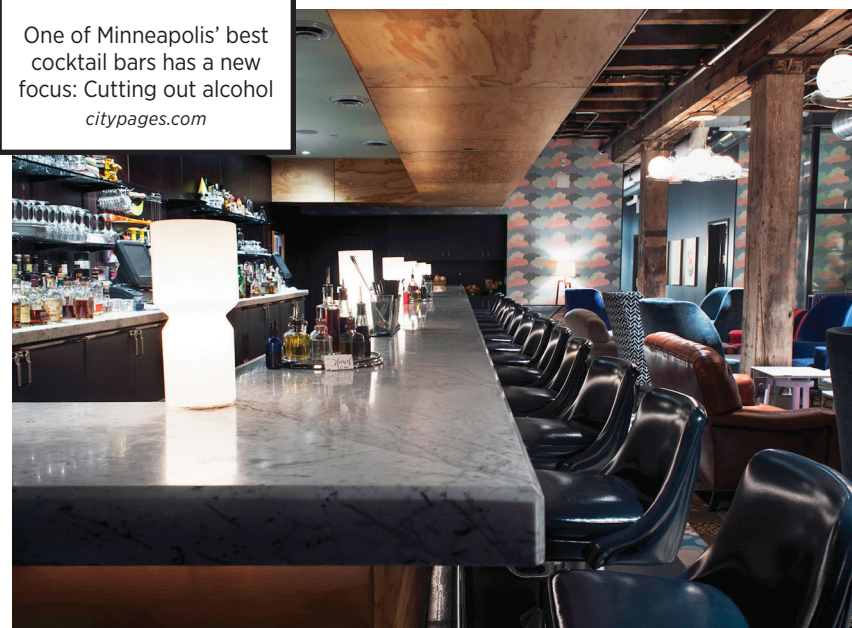
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THE SHORTLIST

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THE STAT SHEET

\$1 million

New Year's Day lottery winnings for two lucky Minnesotans

42

People killed in fires throughout the state last year (the leading cause was careless smoking)

1962

Debut of Ramsey County's first Zamboni; they want to restore it for the 40th anniversary of the "Miracle on Ice"

\$4,500

Average cost of having a baby in the U.S., even with insurance, per a new University of Michigan study

"Isn't partying with Ben Carson and Lou Dobbs kind of its own punishment?"

Reader Theo Kozel responds to "Welp, here's the MyPillow guy at Trump's New Year's Eve party" at citypages.com.

"A NEW ERA"

LET'S HEAR IT FOR 23-year-old Nadia Mohamed, whose swearing-in on Monday made her St. Louis Park's youngest city councilor ever and the council's first Muslim and Somali-American member. She's also—per the Star Tribune—the only renter on the board, making her a real triple threat when it comes to bringing diverse perspectives to the table. "There's a net of people who want to do better [and are] asking, 'What can I do?'... That energy has me motivated," she told the Strib. "That energy is going to keep us progressing for the next four years."

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SMOKE SCREEN

Study: Minnesota's vaping tax prevented smokers from quitting

When e-cigarettes started getting popular a few years ago, they were primarily marketed as a helpful step toward smoking cessation. The problem is, we don't have a lot of data to prove that happens... or doesn't happen, for that matter.

And lately, news in the vaping world has not been great. A rash of people using vape pens were hospitalized with respiratory problems in recent months, and at least three died in Minnesota alone.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now thinks the lung injuries may have something to do with vitamin E acetate inhaled while vaping THC. In the meantime, some states have responded by moving to warn against or ban vape products outright, at least temporarily. Others have gotten around to taxing them.

Minnesota's been doing that last part for a while, and was in fact the first state to impose a tax on this stuff. It started at 35 percent of wholesale price in 2010. In 2013, the tax was increased to a whopping 95 percent. As luck would have it, that gave curious researchers years of data to help answer a common question: Do e-cigarettes help people quit smoking, or not?

According to a new study from the National Bureau of Economic Research, evidence drawn from Minnesota suggests maybe not. Or, at the very least, that more expensive e-cigarettes make people less willing to try. The study, which used 2014-15 as its sample window, estimates 32,000 of the 600,000 adult smokers in Minnesota might have used e-cigarettes to quit smoking during that period if not for the heavy tax on vape products.

"If this tax were imposed on a national level about 1.8 million smokers would

be deterred from quitting in a 10-year period," the study says. "The taxation of e-cigarettes at the same rate as cigarettes could deter more than 2.75 million smokers nationally from quitting in the same period."

The authors are quick to qualify their findings. This study is about how taxes affect adult smokers. It doesn't have any numbers on kids.

Between 2015 and 2017, vape use increased 78 percent among high schoolers, a rise that corresponded with an uptick of sales by Juul Labs Inc., from 2.2 million devices sold in 2016 to 16.2 million in 2017. Juul happens to contain among the highest nicotine content of any e-cig, according to the CDC.

Closer to home, the Minnesota Department of Health found that the number of 11th graders who vaped in the past month jumped by more than half in the past three years. Meanwhile, the number of eighth graders who had done the same doubled. To that end, Minnesota is suing Juul for allegedly targeting teens and getting them hooked. (The company denies that claim.)

As of December, 16 percent of patients hospitalized with vaping-related lung injuries nationwide were under 18. Some were



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as young as 13. By the end of the month, Minnesota alone had seen somewhere between 100 and 150 cases.

The authors of the study say the results suggest not taxing vapes could have "public health benefits." But that's only "one side" of the policy debate, which must be "weighted" against the potential impact on youth. If cheaper e-cigs are as appealing to teens as they are to smokers, then we've merely replaced an old vice with a new one. —HANNAH JONES

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This badass MN filmmaker brought Riot Grrrl sensibility to theaters

By ALEX KIES

The year is 1997. There's a new teen sex comedy coming to your town. It's titled *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore*, and it doesn't give a shit what you think about it.

Mary Jane is a feminist piss-take on the teen comedies of John Hughes and other filmmakers from the '80s, replacing the genre's notorious racism and sexism with punk-rock vibes and sex-positivity. The story follows one woman's last summer before college working at a Minnesota movie theater with a gaggle of twentysomething misfits and burnouts who quickly become her family.

The film receives a rapturous response at the Chicago Underground Film Festival, and its Sundance screening quickly sells out. Admirers include Roger Ebert, who praises its "offhand, unaffected freshness." Feminist filmmaker Allison Anders calls it "the most independent of all the indies I know," and *Wayne's World* director Penelope Spheeris says that writer/director/editor/co-producer Sarah Jacobson "has the kind of energy you just [think will] never stop. Her films have that same quality."

"Everyone talks about living in the post #MeToo era," says Jacobson's friend Jake Fogelnest. "Here was a woman who made films in the '90s; who was screaming about that stuff in her work and in her life before it became a fashion accessory button at a Hollywood awards ceremony."

At a mere 25 years of age, Edina High graduate Jacobson was kicking ass and taking names. She would go on to create a social network connecting arthouse theaters to indie filmmakers—no easy task in an era before internet chatrooms and online communities had really taken off. Tragically, *Mary Jane* would be her sole feature film, as she would die seven years later from uterine cancer.

"The statements she made still stand and resonate today," says novelist and film writer Annie Choi. "I don't want to say that it hasn't gotten better for women, but when you watch her work you realize how little some things have changed and how far we have to go. So it's still this battle cry.... The urgency is still incredibly relevant."

In the era of films like *Ladybird*, *Juno*, and *Booksmart*, it's easy to see how *Mary Jane* was a trailblazer, laying the groundwork for future female-driven coming-of-age stories. Now, about 15 years later,

Remembering SARAH JACOBSON



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Jacobson's films are finding new fans at special screenings across the nation and through her first DVD and Blu-Ray release.

Still from *I Was a Teenage Serial Killer*

Jacobson was born in New Jersey 1971, but in her teens her family moved to Edina, which she would later refer to as "the snottiest suburb in the Twin Cities area."

"I was never really pretty; I was never into makeup or fashion; I always felt really alienated," she told Punk Planet in 1997.

As a Jewish girl from New Jersey, she discovered she didn't look or act like her new contemporaries. "These were these girls who were really blonde. They were jocks and they got good grades, and I was like, 'I wanna be friends with these girls."

**"I was never really
pretty; I was never
into makeup or
fashion; I always felt
really alienated."**

These are the perfect girls."

When they did include her, it was "only as a way of trying to get me to convert to Christianity... which freaked me out." An invitation to Bible camp was her breaking point. "After that I was like, 'You know, fuck this. I'm not going to sit around and wait for these people to accept me.'"

So she sought out Edina's outcasts. "To meet a punk rocker and have them tell you about socialism... after going to a little Molly Ringwald high school, meeting people like that was really exciting."

It didn't hurt that Jacobson was coming of age at the zenith of the Twin Cities' music scene, Babes in Toyland and the Replacements being two of her favorites.

Much like *Mary Jane's* Jane, her crew of friendly burnouts, music heads, and punks were like family to her.

Soon, Jacobson was making zines. A regular at shows, she joined a band and recorded an album. But film, not music, was her true medium of choice.

She loved slashers and movies about punk rock, but she also had a secret love for uncool high school sex comedies like *Sixteen Candles* and *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. These were some of the most prominent representations of teenage sexuality available to her.

Except Molly Ringwald and the other stars of these flicks rarely had sex.

"[Ringwald's characters] wanted a boyfriend, and she wanted romance, and it was implied that they would be having sex afterwards," Jacobson opined in *Bitch Magazine* in 1997. "But I wanted to see girls having sex from their point of view. You got to see Tom Cruise running around having sex. There's so much time spent with the geek, and he gets laid... I could give a shit that the geek got laid. I don't get off on that."

Then she realized something many young women do.

"Everything you see on TV or in the movies or in media representation, it's all... women are sexual objects," she told *Bitch*.

While still in high school, she came across another source of inspiration: Jim Jarmusch's *Stranger Than Paradise*.

"I'm going to do this," she remembered thinking upon seeing it. "This is what I'm going to do."

The confluence of punk's DIY aesthetic and *Stranger Than Paradise's* low-budget cool galvanized Jacobson, who despite her partying and rebelliousness graduated

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Still from *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore*

fun, and use what you have. It was music to Jacobson's ears.

Next was her first "actual" film, "I Was a Teenage Serial Killer," a movie Jacobson would put together with no budget.

"Serial Killer" tells the story of a young woman who, after her mother's death, starts fighting toxic masculinity through murder. She pushes a catcaller in front of a bus. She beats a guy to death with a dustbuster. It's all played for laughs.

"Serial Killer" ends with a tonal shift from searing anger to earnestness, a move that would typify her later work. In the final scene, the teenage killer breaks down, telling a drug dealer on the street about how she was sexually abused as a child. Instead of reacting to that information, he hits on her.

"No one wants to listen to my story!" she yells, almost slitting his throat with a broken bottle before smashing it to the ground. Then, she turns directly to the camera: "My story exists whether anyone listens to me or not. I'm gonna tell them anyway." She turns and walks away as credits roll over the raw power chords of "My Secret," a song about killing a child abuser by Heavens to Betsy, Corinne Tucker's pre-Sleater-Kinney project.

"When 'Serial Killer' came out, it resonated with a lot of women," says Choi. "It fed into their anger, legitimized their feelings. It gave a voice to something that had been intensifying for a long time."

Jacobson's classmates and subsequent audiences loved it, groaning at gory close-ups and chuckling at the audacious one-liners. "Serial Killer" went on to be named one of Film Comment's Top 25 Short Films of All Time.

with straight A's (and five suspensions). That was good enough to get her into Bard College's film program, so she headed east in the fall of 1989.

There, she was faced with elitism and stuffy intellectualism in the theoretically focused film department. It was against that environment she made her first short film: "Road Movie, or: What I Learned in a Buick Station Wagon." "Road Movie" was about a female film student who takes a road trip after debuting a short film to her snooty classmates. It's a rush of images and sounds with light cultural commentary and slapstick humor.

Like her protagonist, Jacobson "just had to get away" from Bard. She made a fateful transfer to the San Francisco Art Institute, where she studied under experimental film icon George Kuchar. Kuchar and his twin brother, Mike, had shot and distributed their surreal genre comedies independently since the late 1960s. Their films' frank homosexuality and violent, offbeat humor made them a mainstay in independent film circles.

Kuchar taught his students to shoot like he did: Move fast, travel light, have

Advertorial



NOTHING BUT HEMP

As the decade comes to a close and the time of new year resolutions takes hold, cannabis fans across America have many successes to look back on — an exciting prospects for the future.

In many ways 2019 was a landmark year for hemp and cannabidiol, or CBD. Hemp was legalized at the end of 2018, and market and government responses have flooded the public as news stories have streamed in throughout the year and more and more people try CBD.

According to reporting in Quartz, hemp acreage in the U.S. expanded to 100 times the land area it occupied in 2014, when industrial hemp was limited to research institutions and illicit growing operations. This rapid change makes hemp the fastest growing crop in American agricultural life. It is also extremely popular among farmers struggling to meet export expectations amid the ongoing trade war with China.

The total acreage for hemp production in the U.S. reached nearly 150,000 acres in 2019. That hemp is highly valued compared to many crops farmers have long leaned on, and is used for textiles, rope, bioplastics and perhaps most importantly, CBD oil.

CBD is a non-psychoactive relative of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. Unlike THC, CBD delivers marijuana's relaxation and other benefits without the mind-altering high. 2019 has proven that people love to use CBD for their chronic pain, anxiety, inflammation, insomnia and other issues.

Truly, 2020 holds a long list of possibilities for hemp professionals and fans as the industry is only projected to become more and more accepted and popular. While testimonials have poured in over the year exalting CBD's usefulness, the scientific data still lags behind due to the longstanding prohibition on hemp that held back research and inquiry.

Government regulators have also spent 2019 trying to cope with the booming market for hemp, with very little clear guidance from federal government bodies like the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration. Average CBD customer faces many obstacles and opportunities going into 2020. Novelty products around every corner and vendors of every stripe (and reputation) have some concerned about quality and reliability.

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Off the back of that success, Jacobson and her mother, Ruth Ellen, started Station Wagon Productions and, in 1994, began working on *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore*.

The plot was based on an autobiographical novel she wrote in high school about working at the Uptown Theatre with a group of twentysomething burnouts who formed powerful friendships. To the story she added bits about losing her virginity and learning how to masturbate.

Over the next three years, she would work on the script, film, rig lighting, and edit with what she described as the "bare minimum of what you need to make a movie." That bare minimum: one 16mm camera, one tape recorder, one microphone, four lights, \$6,000, and one bra. When the bra gave out halfway through production, she made a short documentary about buying her first fitted bra.

Although *Mary Jane* is set in Minneapolis, it was shot in San Francisco. Station Wagon Productions' office was in Skid Row, where she recalled being spit on by "street people" on her walks home. The production ran out of money twice, but Jacobson's aggressive networking and touring paid off. The movie was saved by cash infusions from fans like Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon and Tamra Davis, the indie-turned-mainstream director of *Billy Madison*. Eventually, Jacobson's mother moved to San Francisco to help her complete the film.

Jacobson understood that she only had one shot at a debut movie, and she wanted to make it count. "Film is so

Jacobson says "fuck you" to cancer.

hard that it's not really worth it unless you're showing something that hasn't really been said before," she told *Bitch*. "Every girl wishes that they had an older girl who would tell them what's up with sex... I wanted to make a movie where the girl learns to have control over her own sex life."

Mary Jane begins with a clichéd sex scene: a gauzy lens, sub-Cinemax sex, the participants not really touching, swaddled in sheets. Then there's a jump cut to something a bit more realistic: an uncomfortable, brief, socks-on session featuring missionary on a picnic blanket in a graveyard.

In the male-centric films *Mary Jane* comments on, deflowering is the narrative engine, the plot's resolution. In *Mary Jane*, the heroine's first time is a call to action.

Jane drives in from the suburbs to work at the Victoria The-

ater, a stand-in for the Uptown. She's the youngest employee, and by far the least cynical. She soon forms a family with her co-workers, which include bisexual punk rocker Ericka and her gay manager, Ray, who takes her to her valedictorian dinner as her father.

Over the summer, she develops romantic relationships with a dreamy guy named Tom and sensitive, affable weirdo Ryan. Both are good guys who respect Jane's boundaries, emotions, and agency.

Then there's Matt, the staff's mercurial druggie, who antagonizes Jane, physically bullying her and denigrating her class status and Jewish heritage. Over

"I wanted to see girls having sex from their point of view. I could give a shit that the geek got laid. I don't get off on that."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAM GREEN



A young Jacobson performs onstage (above). Jacobson's mother, Ruth Ellen, was a big supporter of her films (left).

the course of the film, Jane ceases to allow herself to be Matt's victim.

"I wanted guys to be able to see it from a girl's point of view and kind of understand women and not have to be all embarrassed about it," she told the Austin Chronicle in 1998 about her hopes for male audiences.

But boiling *Mary Jane* down to a raunchy coming-of-age story would sell it short. It also documents the height of the Riot Grrl movement, the decline of West Coast hardcore, and the beginnings of emo. The soundtrack features Mudhoney, Superchunk, Bikini Kill, Heavens to Betsy, and Babes in Toyland. Dead Kennedys frontman Jello Biafra cameos as a concerned moviegoer, and AFI's Davey Havok plays one of Ericka's groupies. (AFI also lent three songs to the soundtrack.)

The Twin Cities loom large in the film. Jane sleeps beneath one of Daniel Corrigan's iconic Replacements photos. One character wears a T-shirt from a Jim Dine exhibition at the Walker. The co-workers see Mudhoney at Nye's. Characters race motorcycles down Lyndale Avenue and road-trip to Madison.

After a grueling three-and-a-half-year production, *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore* debuted at the 1997 Chicago Underground Film Festival. Jacobson was just shy of her 26th birthday.

The film received positive blurbs from Ed Halter and Roger Ebert, and *Mary Jane* went on to a sold-out screening at Sundance.

But unlike other Sundance success stories, *Mary Jane* didn't land a distribution deal. In later interviews, Jacobson speculated that "girl films" flummoxed Hollywood.

Undeterred, Jacobson hopped in her trusty Buick station wagon and went on tour, screening a 16mm print of "Serial Killer" and *Mary Jane* three weeks out of each month all over the world from 1997 to 2000. She arranged her own press and screenings, while her mom kept track of her tour schedule back in San Francisco.

During this time, she gave effusive interviews in local papers, where she insisted that they include her address so readers could send away for a VHS of her movies (just \$2!).

On the road, folks who might have never seen her films otherwise were showing up to screenings. "The biggest thing people say to me is, 'I wish I had seen this when I was 16,'" she told Bitch magazine.

Through her travels and screenings, Jacobson created a network for independent cinemas and video stores all over America. "The independent distribution system used to be a safety net for small filmmakers. Now the corporations—like Disney's Miramax—are taking over the safety net. So we need to build another one," she said in a 1998 Star Tribune

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MERGES IN MARCH

interview.

All the while, Jacobson wrote for *Indiewire.com*. There, she coined the term “Indiewood” to describe Harvey Weinstein’s high-production, high-budget “indie” films, like *Pulp Fiction* and *Mallrats*. She also wrote a travelogue/criticism column, called “Underground,” for *Punk Planet*.

Eventually, touring became lonely and unprofitable. After three years, Jacobson moved to New York City, where she worked in television for VH1 and Oprah’s burgeoning Oxygen Network. She also taught filmmaking courses at community colleges.

She continued to work in film, producing music videos for Fluffy and Man or Astro-Man?, and produced a documentary on the making of *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains*, a girl rock dramedy directed by Lou Adler of Cheech and Chong’s *Up in Smoke*, written by *Slap Shot*’s Nancy Dowd. Her documentary, as well as an oral history she wrote on the film for the Beastie Boys’ *Grand Royale* magazine, got the ball rolling on Rhino reissuing *Stains* on DVD in 2008.

“Sarah Jacobson is the reason you can see *The Fabulous Stains* at the push of a button today,” says friend Fogelnest.

During this time, Jacobson continued writing draft after draft of her follow-up



LEE JACOBSON

feature, a tale about a punk-rock girl group inspired by *Fabulous Stains*. Her career was again on the upswing.

But Jacobson was also dealing with a nagging, mystery ailment. She was losing weight and needed a cane to help her walk.

To generate buzz for her second film, she organized a retrospective of her work in New York. But as that event was coming together, she received a cancer diagnosis.

Even after her death, Jacobson continues to inspire indie filmmakers and writers to fight the man.

Things took a rapid turn, and the February 2004 screening became a posthumous one. Jacobson had died in New York City at 32 years old.

But the energy Jacobson put out into the world, through her work and through

her promotion of others, wasn’t so easily stopped. “She rallied the Riot Grrrl movement,” Choi explains. “So in those circles, her films continued to get passed around and discussed—even after she passed away.”

After her death, her friends and family founded the Sarah Jacobson Film Grant, which has awarded funds annually to a female-identifying independent filmmaker for the last 15 years. In 2012, Turner Classic Movies played *Mary Jane* as part of its Underground series—just how Jacobson had seen *Fabulous Stains* decades earlier. In 2016, the American Genre Film Archive, the curatorial branch of the Alamo Drafthouse theater chain, restored her films for a new theatrical release. A blu-ray featuring “Serial Killer” and *Mary Jane*, and loaded with her shorts, was released this past September.

Jacobson was taken from us before her ideas and concerns were mainstreamed, before the internet fully became a useful distribution tool for independent filmmakers. We can only imagine where she would be in 2019 with the surge against institutionalized Hollywood sexism and abuse.

The work we have, however, remains prescient, and now it’s more accessible than ever for a new generation of teenagers. 

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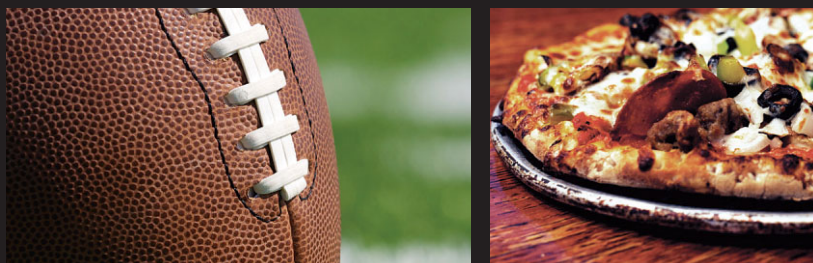
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BY SARAH BRUMBLE

Remember what it felt like to request a hall pass just to go to the bathroom? Teachers could, and sometimes actually would, deny you.

This period of life teemed with petty indignities: being sent to bed when you weren't tired, waking only to recite the Pledge of Allegiance like a drone each morning at school, being forbidden from walking on "big roads," and/or having to ask your parents' permission to drink soda with dinner.

No one of a certain age escaped without begging the adults in their lives to buy them a Clearly Canadian.

Where I grew up, a fast-food chain called Rax (best known for combining roast beef sandwiches, curly fries, and salad bars under late-'80s solariums) stocked these covetable teardrop-shaped bottles. Chilling in ice buckets by the front registers, they'd become glazed in pearls of sweat that mirrored our youthful desperation.

"But they're *sparkling water*," we'd plead, as the Mountain Blackberry flavor glistened before us.

At a certain point, my adults stopped even saying "no." Silence was (and is) an answer.

Backing up a few steps: There once was a soda called Clearly Canadian. This was before the heyday of La Croix, but it similarly was described as "sparkling water" due to a combo of effervescence and sourcing from Canadian spring water (or something).

As children, we mistakenly believed playing up this point would help sell our parents on the objects of our desire, which were, of course, chock-full of sugar. Its clean design and tantalizing "natural flavors" like Mountain Blackberry, Orchard Peach, and Wild Cherry were downright magnetic.

In 1993, sales of the British Columbia-based Clearly Food & Beverage Company Ltd. hit \$155 million. Before Y2K arrived, they'd expanded their portfolio to include Orbitz—yunno, that soda with the floating gelatin beads—and then, just as quickly as they'd descended, both vanished into thin air.

But one day not long ago, I stumbled upon a time machine disguised as a mini fridge, inexplicably stocked to the gills with Clearly Canadian. Its curator is John Nguyen, the buying manager at Green Machine, a tobacco shop on Nicollet Avenue in south Minneapolis.

I should've expected Ngueyn would have a horde of Orbitz, too.

POPPIN' BOTTLES

One of the only places in Minneapolis selling the 1990s' hottest soda, Clearly Canadian, is a Whittier tobacco shop



ZOE PRINDS-FLASH

"But the new recipe, they don't have the floating bubbles," he informed me, as a single tear rolled down my face. "Yeah, there's another brand, it's called Capsule. I have that, too. It's the old formula, with the floating gelatin."

"They rebranded themselves?" I asked him.

"Exactly. Because Orbitz sold their name to the website Orbitz," said Nguyen, failing to explain how one dead soda became two separate, niche-market zombie sodas.

Nguyen has positioned the shop's soda fridge at the front of the store, where it glows from a dim corner, beckoning to customers like a mirage just when they've almost made it out the door. An army of New York Seltzers occupies most of the real estate, arranged in a perfect Pantone spread. On the top shelf, he displays a couple bottles of Fanta that go for 30 or 40 bucks a pop, rare enough that he'll only put out one or two at a time.

"Oh I be searchin'," beamed Nguyen.

In his late 30s, Nguyen makes the most of his role at the shop. Everything in the store, which he describes as an "emporium of rare exotic items," is a means to an end, delivering on enthusiasm and nostalgia.

"This store is like a toy shop for adults. All this stuff is retro. Pinky and the Brain—" he said, gesturing behind us to a pair of 18-inch tall figurines from '90s classic *Ani-maniacs*, who've been staring holes in our backs the entire time, "we couldn't have those when we were kids. [Sodas] were expensive—three bucks?—back then. So I just bring it all back. Now we're adults. We can buy that."

Nguyen has been stocking that little cooler with throwback sodas—plus a couple local bottled varieties—for about three years. He says customers love it. All of the beverages are made with real cane sugar plus some ineffable, Proustian quality to which an anonymous internet reviewer gave five stars (for the blackberry flavor), and succinctly described thus:

"This tastes like my childhood."

Green Machine keeps Clearly Canadian in stock thanks to a rogue beverage distributor with a soft spot for the drink. According to Nguyen, after he "whined" to this guy about wanting to sell it in the shop enough, "he was like, 'You know what, I used to drink that too,' and then he picked it up. He's just not promoting it because he's drinking it himself, y'know what I'm saying?"

Clearly Canadian's return to markets from the brink of extinction followed an unlikely route. A successful crowdfunding campaign in 2013 paved the way for the manufacture and preorder of 25,000 cases of the beverage in 2015, which began a new chapter for the retro soda. Capsule (néé Orbitz) followed suit. But outside of Green Machine's like-minded business hookup, the only places known to stock the beverage in the Twin Cities are Cost Plus World Market and Hy-Vee.

The year 2020 won't be mistaken for 1993, though. Rax filed for Chapter 11 long ago, and we're living in the golden age of La Croix, which has profoundly affected our taste buds when it comes to non-alcoholic fizzy stuff. And make no mistake, despite Clearly Canadian's "sparkling water" proclamations, our parents were right: These cherubs are distinctly sodas. After all these years, their formula hasn't changed—you have.

But is that really a bad thing? Only you can say how much sweetness you can bear in the here and now. ☐

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JAN 10



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JAN 11



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JAN 24



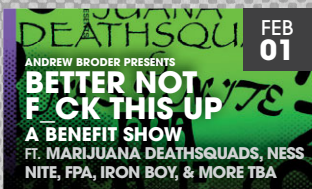
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JAN 25



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JAN 30



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FEB 01



JJ GREY & MOFRO
WITH FREDDY & FRANCINE

FEB 07



RODDY RICCH

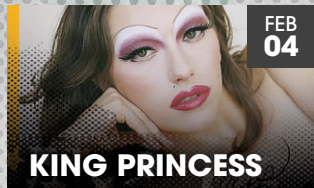
FEB 11



THE SUBURBS
WITH MILOE, DJ JAKE RUDH

FEB 14

PALACE THEATRE



KING PRINCESS

FEB 04



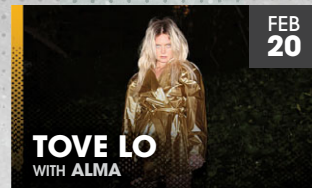
GRACE POTTER
WITH DEVON GILFILLIAN

FEB 08



CALEXICO AND IRON & WINE
WITH MADISON CUNNINGHAM

FEB 14



TOVE LO
WITH ALMA

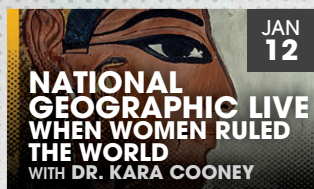
FEB 20



BIG HEAD TODD AND THE MONSTERS
FT. HAZEL MILLER
WITH LOS COLOGNES

FEB 21

FITZGERALD THEATER



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WHEN WOMEN RULED THE WORLD
WITH DR. KARA COONEY

JAN 12



LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO

MAR 01



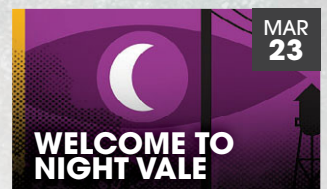
KAMASI WASHINGTON

MAR 04



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LIVE
LIFE ON THE VERTICAL
WITH MARK SYNNOTT

MAR 08



WELCOME TO NIGHT VALE

MAR 23

FINE LINE



HOLD YOUR LADY TIGHT NIGHT
COUNTRY & WESTERN DANCE PARTY

JAN 10



YOLA
W/ AMYTHYST KIAH

JAN 15



NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS
W/ SOUTHERN AVENUE

JAN 18



COLD PEPPERS 2
W/ buxaplenity, KANDOR, HARLZ, HeDawn, WILL ROBINSON, & MORE

JAN 08



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JAN 12



YOUR SMITH
W/ CHELSEA JADE

JAN 21



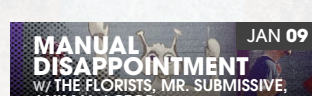
RON POPE
W/ CAROLINE SPENCE

JAN 22



GZA 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF LIQUID SWORDS

JAN 26



MANUAL DISAPPOINTMENT
W/ THE FLORISTS, MR. SUBMISSIVE, ANIMAL ACTOR

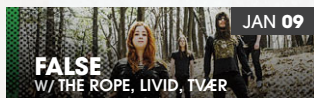
JAN 09



BOYISH
W/ MARIAH MERCEDES, ALLERGEN

JAN 13

TURF CLUB



FALSE
W/ THE ROPE, LIVID, TVER

JAN 09



WILLIE WISELY, TURN! TURN! TURN!, AND DYLAN HICKS

JAN 10



HENHOUSE PROWLERS
W/ FIRESIDE COLLECTIVE, MAX GRAHAM TRIO

JAN 11



BRAVER (FINAL SHOW)
W/ ROBOSAPIEN, DO A BARREL ROLL!

JAN 10



MPLS DREW AND AUSTIN WILLETTE
W/ TREV, JAKE GILLER, theMARAJ

JAN 14



THE CACTUS BLOSSOMS
W/ JACK KLATT

JAN 13



MRS. PINKY AND THE GREAT FOX AND VIBE CORP
W/ GHOSTY, SOCIAL NOUS

JAN 16



ELECTRIC FEEL
2000s INDIE DANCE PARTY
W/ DJ FoolProof

JAN 18



FLATFOOT 56
W/ NEW ROCKET UNION, THE LANGER'S BALL

JAN 11



TAYLOR MCFERRIN

JAN 16

AROUND TOWN



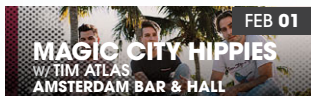
MIPSO
W/ BRIDGET KEARNEY & BENJAMIN LAZAR DAVIS
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

JAN 26



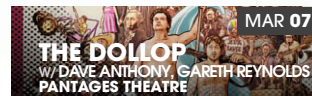
POPPY
W/ VOWWS
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

JAN 30



MAGIC CITY HIPPIES
W/ TIM ATLAS
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

FEB 01



THE DOLLOP
W/ DAVE ANTHONY, GARETH REYNOLDS
PANTAGES THEATRE

MAR 07



THEO KATZMAN
W/ RETT MADISON
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

MAR 07

A LIST

FRIDAY It's tattoo time in Minneapolis p. 19

SATURDAY Bent hosts a winter luau p. 19

SUNDAY Kids and art at Mia p. 21

WEDNESDAY 1.8

COMEDY

JORDAN CARLOS

ACME COMEDY CO.

Jordan Carlos is a standup comic who has also done a fair bit of TV work, both as a writer and as a performer. Comedy fans may recognize him as "Alan" from *The Colbert Report*, where he portrayed host Stephen Colbert's "black co-worker." Onstage, he discusses, among other things, being in a mixed-race marriage. He's also not afraid to dabble in politics. "Our president is not boring," he tells an audience. "Season one and season two have been crazy. So many twists and turns. My favorite was how he blamed the California wildfires on California. 'Did you see all the leaves they didn't rake?'" says Carlos in a perfect Donald Trump voice. "They were asking for it." Carlos also enjoys the president's tweets. "I check Twitter; what's he going to say next? I like when he tries tweeting things into law." 18+. 8:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393.

Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON

THURSDAY 1.9

ART/GALLERY

SPIT SHADE III: SAILORS & SWEETHEARTS

GAMUT GALLERY

Behind every great tattoo is an artist. While they excel at working with needles, ink, and skin, many tattoo artists also create in other mediums, including digital art, painting, and drawing. See some of their works at Gamut Gallery, which is hosting an exhibition of pieces by folks in town for the Minneapolis Tattoo Arts Convention. The exhibition will feature a collection from 50 local and national talents, curated by Minneapolis tattooers Rachel Bringgold and Adam Underwood. See these artists and more at the opening reception from 7 to 11 p.m. Thursday, January 9, which will also feature an all-vinyl set by DJ No Pants. Free; \$10-

Tattoo artists share their off-hour creations at Gamut Gallery.



JEREMY SOUNDERS

\$15 opening reception. 717 S. 10th St., Minneapolis; 612-367-4327. **Through February 13 —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

COMEDY

MIKE VECCHIONE

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

While comedian Mike Vecchione has performed for a variety of audiences overseas, he's just returned from

a unique set of shows in Israel put together by an organization called Comedy for Kody. "It's named for a young boy who was murdered by terrorists," Vecchione explains. The organization raises money for summer camps, as well as therapy for survivors of terrorist attacks. "They've been doing it twice a year for 10 years now, and I was fortunate enough to

be asked to do this tour. It was life-changing." Vecchione and the other comics performed at night, leaving them time to visit various religious and historical sites around the country during the day. Show organizer and fellow comic Avi Liberman was their guide. "I was building my Israel [set] while I was there," Vecchione adds, "I

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 ►



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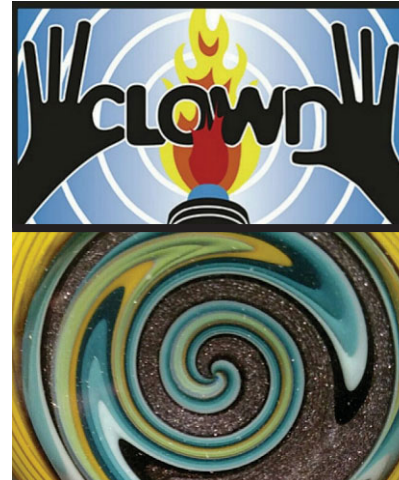
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THURSDAY

ART/GALLERY

A COMMON THREAD

TEXTILE CENTER

TIM+THOM



LET'S BE FRANK PHOTOGRAPHY

This week marks the 20th anniversary of the Textile Center's member exhibition, "A Common Thread." Over 100 fiber works will be on view, showcasing techniques like stitching, crocheting, lacemaking, basketry, sculpture, and mixed media. Check out intricate quilts, vibrant patterns, breathtaking bead work, and new innovations that cross disciplines. From old school to new school, there will be tons of stuff to see from the many different kinds of artists that make up the Textile Center community. The opening reception is on Thursday, January 9, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. 3000 University Ave. SE, Minneapolis; 612-436-0464. **Through March 14 —SHEILA REGAN**

CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

was writing jokes for them every day." He's not sure he'll be able to use any of those bits back home in the States. That's not a huge worry, though, as Vecchione has plenty to talk about with American audiences. "I was in Aruba," he says, "and so I talk about trying to get someone you don't know to rub sunblock on you. It's such an intimate thing, but then it's not." 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$16-\$23. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday —P.F. WILSON**

FRIDAY 1.10

SEXY BOOKS

MY FRIEND CHUCK

MIXED BLOOD THEATRE

Dr. Chuck Tingle is known for penning gay romance novels with a twist. His characters include dinosaurs,

sentient corn cobs, Bigfoot, and European vampire night buses. Popular (and lengthy!) titles—and there are many—include *I'm Gay for My Living Billionaire Jet Plane*, *Open Wide for the Handsome Sabertooth Dentist Who Is Also a Ghost*, and *I'm in Love With the Handsome Mummy Racecar in My Butt*. Tingle frequently dabbles in hot topics of the day (*Oppressed in the Butt By My Inclusive Holiday Coffee Cups*) and has even recently ventured into erotica both lesbian (*Sentient Lesbian Jet Ski Gets Me Off*) and bisexual (*My Husband and I Find Our Unicorn and She's a Bigfoot Also My Husband Is a Dinosaur*). If this is all a giant WTF for you, just know that this guy's prolific collection of books and short stories is the stuff of legend if you're into Amazon deep dives. This week, the author of these masterpieces is in town. When he's not writing erotica, he's teaming up with his buddy McKenzie Goodwin for *My Friend Chuck*, a podcast where the two talk about politics, gay Bigfoot helicopters, and LGBTQ issues. Experience the show live at Mixed Blood this Friday. 8 p.m. \$20. 1501 Fourth St. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-6131. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

BODY ART

MINNEAPOLIS TATTOO ARTS CONVENTION

HYATT REGENCY MINNEAPOLIS

This week, art won't just be showcased on the walls of galleries. Downtown, it will also be featured on the bodies of people walking around the Hyatt Regency. Now in its 11th year, the Minneapolis Tattoo Arts Convention draws industry icons, regular folks with rad pieces, and people just beginning their body art collection. There will be over 350 tattoo artists on hand, from folks who traveled the world to be here to locals from shops down the street. There will also be talks and meet-and-greets, with talents from TV programs like *Ink Master* and *Tattoos After Dark* on hand. Other entertainment includes tattoo contests each day, so if you have a super cool back piece, sleeve, or face tat, now's your chance to shine. Circus-style performances include contortionists, folks who do live suspensions, and other oddities, with Alakazam "the human knot," Olde City Sideshow, and Marlo Marquise stopping by. Find tickets at villainarts.com. 2 p.m. to midnight Friday; 11 a.m. to midnight Saturday; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday. \$20 per day; \$40 for a three-day pass. 1300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-370-1234. **Through Sunday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**



Skin is the canvas for these artists.

COURTNEY PERRY/STAR TRIBUNE

THEATER

BLACK COMEDY

THEATRE IN THE ROUND

Black Comedy is a clever sendup of the drawing-room farce in which the lighting (or lack thereof) serves as a key contributor to spiraling bedlam. Scripted by Peter Shaffer, the acclaimed English playwright best known for penning *Equus* and *Amadeus*, *Black Comedy* begins with the best of intentions: Aspiring artist Brindsley Miller is eager to score points with his fiancée's opinionated father, so he borrows some fragile furniture and precious art pieces from his antique-dealer neighbor. Brindsley also invites an influential art collector to appraise his work. A blown fuse eliminates all the lights, throwing their plans into total disarray—even before the unwelcome arrival of an ex-girlfriend. With the theater lit so that audiences can see what the characters cannot, there's pleasure in anticipating each pratfall and collision, as the disoriented figures go flailing over one another, misconstruing intentions and confusing identities while the small apartment devolves into a hilariously unhinged party. 7:30 p.m. Fridays through Saturday; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$22. 245 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis; 612-333-3010. **Through February 2 —BRAD RICHASON**

ART/GALLERY

REVITALIZING SYMBOLS

ARTISTRY AT BLOOMINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Intended to reflect the ways in which Native artists are reviving and reimagining tradition, this exhibition, curated by Alexandra Buffalohead, features work by the eminent and the emerging. Andrea Carlson, Jim Denomie, and George Morrison

are among the former. Also part of the exhibition: Jonathon Thunder's trickster-like creatures, Debra Yepa-Pappan's vibrant digital collages, Chholing Taha's exquisitely detailed evocations of the natural world, and Gwen Nell Westerman's quilts, full of movement and marvels. In all of the work, patterns and symbols come to the fore in celebration of the secular and the sacred. There will be an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, January 10. Free. 1800 W. Old Shakopee Rd., Bloomington; 952-563-8575. **Through February 14 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**

SATURDAY 1.11

BEER

WINTER LUAU

BENT BREWSTILLERY

The weather is real shitty out there right now. For those who can't jet off to a tropical locale, you still have options (kinda). This Saturday, Bent Brewstillery will be going for a Hawaiian vibe at its annual Winter Luau. Drink specials will include fruity mixes like the Island Julep and the Tropical Spirit Whiskey. Eats will be evocative of warm weather, too, with kalua pork, Spam sandwiches, "spam-aroni" and cheese, and mango slaw on the menu. Noon to 11:30 p.m. Free. 1744 Terrace Dr., Roseville; 844-879-2368. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

FESTIVAL

WINTER TRAILS DAY

FORT SNELLING STATE PARK

The prolonged Minnesota winter can be a trying experience, especially under whiteout conditions and subzero temps. To combat cabin fever, the annual Winter

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 ►



Photo by Allen Weeks

"An engrossing musical drama, so superbly integrated that all boundaries between speech, music, and dance blur and dissolve before your eyes." - *Talkin' Broadway*

AREA PREMIERE

BERNARDA ALBA

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BASED ON THE PLAY THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA BY
FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA

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Art featuring kids and created by kids abounds at Mia.



COURTESY OF MIA

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ►

Trail Day at Fort Snelling State Park offers a vast range of activities to encourage engagement with the great outdoors. For those seeking cardio stimulation, the event provides such options as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, winter hiking, and fat-tire biking. Others might prefer sampling the comparatively more relaxed endeavors of ice fishing, archery, or camp games. Best of all, no prior experience is needed to participate in any of the activities. Novices will be supported with complimentary hot cocoa, ongoing demonstrations from outdoors enthusiasts, and a welcoming environment. Regardless of age or ability, the Winter Trails Day is an ideal opportunity to discover a recreational activity capable of transforming our long winters into a season to be enjoyed rather than merely endured. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Free; \$7 day parking. 101 Snelling Lake Rd., St. Paul; 612-725-2389. —BRAD RICHASON

THEATER NOURA

GUTHRIE THEATER

January might seem an odd time for the Guthrie to stage the Christmas-set *Noura*, but this insightful character drama by playwright Heather Raffo offers the kind of emotionally complex scenarios that are welcome any time of year. *Noura* centers on the title character, her husband, and her son, all Iraqi immigrants who have, after eight years in the United States, successfully achieved citizenship. While her husband and son are enthusiastically embracing more American customs, including the acquisition of new names,

Noura finds herself increasingly troubled by how much of their ancestral heritage is being forsaken in the process. Raffo, an Iraqi-American, brings a deeply personal perspective to the narrative, poignantly demonstrating how even the simple act of preparing a traditional dish for a Christmas feast can trigger feelings of homesickness and regret. Directed by Taibi Magar and featuring a cast led by Gamze Ceylan, *Noura* lends a contemporary view to the timeless dilemma of reconciling the culture of a native country with the conventions of an adopted homeland. The show is in previews January 11-16. 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; 1 p.m. Saturdays; 7 p.m. Sundays. \$25-\$79. 818 S. Second St., Minneapolis; 612-377-2224. **Through February 16 —BRAD RICHASON**

SUNDAY 1.12

ARTS/MUSEUM

JUST KIDS

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

Perhaps the next Leibovitz will be discovered among the 200 images and photobooks created by children and teens in this exhibition. Curated by local middle and high school students, the show includes kids' laser-focused views on life from diverse perspectives. Along with photos from Mia's permanent collection, you'll see large-format vintage portraits of children and young adults by Dawoud Bey, recent work by a young Palestinian living in a Beirut refugee camp, Lewis Hine's photographs of child laborers, and images taken by Alec Soth's daughter, Carmen. Free. 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-870-3131. **Through June 14 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**



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FILM

ONE-SHOT WONDER

WWI epic *1917* is a crazy-impressive technical masterpiece



FRANÇOIS DUHAMEL/UNIVERSAL

BY TONY LIBERA

It's inevitable that a big-budget feature presented as a continuous shot will make headlines off its technical maneuvers alone. We moviegoers love a good party trick.

But *1917* isn't just some cheap gimmick. Like *Birdman* before it, this World War I quest uses the pseudo-one-shot method to create an immersive and memorable adventure.

It's a basic enough story: The German army has faked its retreat to lure a British battalion into an ambush. Some higher-ups get wise thanks to aerial photography, but because the Germans destroyed everything getting out of dodge, there's no way to phone up the battalion. If the Brits don't warn them, 1,600 men will be slaughtered, so General Erinmore (Colin Firth) dispatches soldiers Schofield and Blake (George MacKay and Dean-Charles Chapman) to deliver the message by foot.

Though the narrative isn't bad, it admittedly borders on simplistic. *1917* won't dazzle you with intrigue or leave you pondering the human condition—at least not any more than your average war

movie. But a film's success isn't always predicated on the story's complexity. *1917* proves there can be other takeaways.

What director Sam Mendes shoots for is a visceral exercise, a tinkering with the medium's possibilities to create something more akin to a ride than an action-packed blockbuster. The lack of discernible cuts paired with the brutality of the Great War makes for a frantic, unrelenting experience. It's an exhausting movie (in a good way). The only thing that could have made it more intense would be seeing it in, say, the old Mystery Mine Ride theater with the moving chairs (Camp Snoopy represent!). In lieu of that option, an IMAX screening is a must.

Of course, an undertaking this difficult requires a ton of planning and one hell of a cinematographer, which means Roger Deakins is the dude. While *Birdman* is undoubtedly a better movie overall, Deakins and company really up the one-shot ante here. The wartime backdrop supplements the technique's inherent energy, and the fact that most of the movie takes place outside, in broad daylight, without easy places to hide

1917

directed by Sam Mendes
area theaters, now showing

edits, makes what Deakins does in *1917* a crazy-impressive feat.

What's more, the blocking limitations imposed by a one-shot production meant the crew had to get extra crafty to create beautiful shots. It'd be one thing to figure out some safe and steady positions, but that would be boring. Instead, the camera is always circling, moving through trenches, inside buildings, down a river, you name it. The camerawork can call attention to itself at times—like when it moves out a second-story window and down to ground level—but it's so spectacular that it doesn't matter. Mendes and Deakins unapologetically swing for the fences.

At *1917*'s close, Schofield sprints along a trench as bodies and earth explode around him. Given the added weight of the preceding two-hour journey, it becomes a standout shot in film history and phenomenal capstone to the movie. *1917* is probably the closest thing to real war we'll ever get at the movies. **C+**

SIBLINGS' RIVALRIES

Becky Shaw revels in uncomfortable laughter



ALYSSA KRISTINE

BY JAY GABLER

The pseudo-sibling pair at the center of *Becky Shaw* are, well, theatrical. They have big mouths and quick (if not always sharp) wits that get them into trouble time and again. Playwright Gina Gionfriddo holds the characters back from the brink of caricature, though, and you may realize you know people like this. You might have dated a Max or a Suzanna. You might even be one.

That's an uncomfortable truth, and despite the show's provocative plot twists and frequent chuckles, *Becky Shaw* isn't a particularly comfortable experience. In Gremlin Theatre's strong new production of the 2008 Pulitzer finalist, director Ellen Fenster owns that difficulty and turns it into a virtue. We believe Suzanna (Olivia Wilusz) wants to change, and we want to see whether she can.

As the play opens, Suzanna and Max (Logan Verdoorn) are coping with the recent death of Suzanna's father. He and his wife (a snappy Jodi Kellogg) essentially adopted Max as a child, when Max's mother died. It's immediately apparent that Max and Suzanna, who share the kind of physical intimacy you don't typically see in thirtysomething siblings, have sustained a quarter-century of mutual attraction.

Is that plausible? Hey, it's theater. What's certainly realistic is the way that the pair's emotional intimacy interferes with their other relationships. After the script flashes forward several months, we find Suzanna married to Andrew (Kevin Fanshaw). The couple decide to set Max up with Andrew's co-worker, the eponymous Becky Shaw (Chelsie Newhard).

BECKY SHAW

Gremlin Theatre
550 Vandalia St., St. Paul
Through January 26; 1-888-71-TICKETS

The play is well-suited for Gremlin's thrust stage, which brings the audience in close for these difficult conversations. Set designer Carl Schoenborn creates a series of distinctive spaces with well-placed touches of set dressing, and Emmet Kowler's stylish projections add visual interest, all in the service of the storytelling.

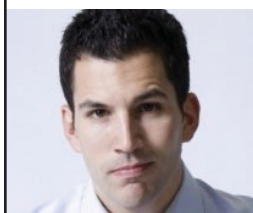
The smartly assembled actors consistently shine. Verdoorn cracks like a whip, his timing relentless as Max pushes buttons with the confidence of a master manipulator. At first Suzanna's just as grating, but a superb Wilusz gradually opens up and lets us see that she's having doubts about her allegiance to this cruel man.

Although Andrew doesn't get any zippy quips, Fanshaw lands the show's biggest laughs as a kind person who fell in love with Suzanna at her most vulnerable and is now realizing what she's like when she regains her confidence. The suspicious Max thinks Andrew's supportive strength might also be a weakness, and Fanshaw subtly shows us how Max might be right.

Becky Shaw herself is an enigma who comes into these characters' lives and catalyzes a realignment of their relationships. Seemingly simple, Becky proves surprisingly insinuating, and Newhard wisely plays her with restraint. Why is the play named after her? Playwright Gionfriddo lets you figure that out for yourself, but you're left with the impression that Becky would think the title perfectly apt. **A**



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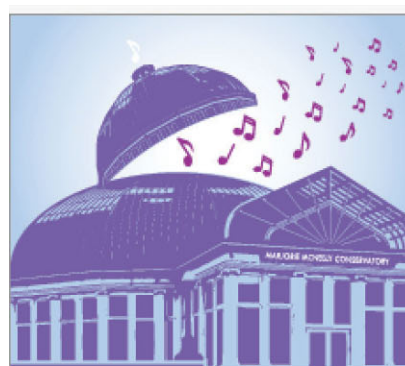
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THE 20 BEST LOCAL ALBUMS OF 2019

From rap to pop-punk, indie to electronic, here's how the Twin Cities sounded last year

BY KEITH HARRIS

I thought 20 might be a little ambitious. I was wrong.

At first I set out to make a top 10 list, like any normal critic would do, but I just couldn't bring myself to trim down that far. I wondered if I could expand my list to 20 local releases that I would recommend without serious reservations. Turns out I not only could, but I still had to make a few hard choices about what to leave off.

Ahem, *Try Again*

"I don't wanna wait another day, another hour" may be a power-pop truism, but this trio has the abrupt stops, guitar drop-outs, building momentum, and enthusiastic mixed-gender vocals to make you believe, envy, and share their breathless anticipation.

Atmosphere, *Whenever*

A new Atmosphere album may no longer be An Event, but that suits Slug's flair

for the quotidian just fine. He bobs and weaves through the everyday pleasures, anxieties, and lusts of a less-ordinary-than-he-fronts middle-aged guy while Ant modestly flaunts his unflagging ability to craft beats that hew true to his style without repeating himself.

booboo, *I Don't Want to Wait*

Though this EP first appeared in August, there's something wintry in its marrow, something spare and forlorn in its six tracks whether they're punctured with a note or two of keyboard or draped in full electronic sheets, and something haunting in the way booboo's vocals are Auto-Tuned to intricate flutters.

Dizzy Fae, *No GMO*

What does Dizzy Fae sound like? Depends on the track. She's frisky atop the dappled percolation of "Big Wall," delicate when her falsetto hovers above the textures

of "Celebration." But she's not showcasing her versatility or refusing to commit. Dizzy's just being herself.

4th Curtis, *Invisible Ax*

Lex Noens flexes their sinister wit on this trio's second full-length, opening with "Blood on my guitar strings/Makes me feel so intense" and claiming kinship with "Marie Antoinette": "My skin is pale/My rack is huge/And I don't have a head." The guitar-bass-drums foundation is as "scrappy" as the bio claims, but all manner of keyboards, including a harpsichord, add a suitably macabre elegance.

Fragile Canyons, *Here It Is*

The Twin Cities' finest purveyor of niche local music memes, Andy Engstrom is more earnest in songwriter mode. The way he obsesses over the phrase "terrible desire" allows you to project your deepest cultural fears upon that lyric, and the guitar jangle sometimes suggests an unskewed Pavement placing "Range Life" at the center of its aesthetic without ever quite going full Gin Blossoms.

Gully Boys, *Phony*

If *Not So Brave* offered a snapshot of a band discovering who it was, the musicians who recorded these five tracks are well aware of their abilities and determined to find out what else they can do. Kathy Callahan's voice is both more flexible and

more powerful, and the rhythm section of Nadirah McGill and Natalie Klemond is even more versatile, with unexpected harmonies sweetening the punch and trickier guitar parts adding depth.

Lady Midnight, *Death Before Mourning*

Adriana Rimpel's first proper full-length as her alter ego is held together not just by a voice but by a sensibility, a political thrust that's still luxurious, rejecting the sense that hardening or austerity is necessary to take a committed stance. At times she takes on a slightly seductive tone, like a more companionable Sade; at others her voice floats amid the dense electronics as though intoning a mantra and seeking to heal through empathy.

Lydia Liza, *Of Unsound Mind*

Whether autopsying heartbreak or stating her prerogatives, Lydia Hoglund's husky voice has a knowing quality that adds an edge to her songs: No one would want to be on the wrong side of her lyrics. Fleshing out these arrangements are guitars that make introspective noises in the background yet crunch forward when appropriate.

Lunch Duchess, *Crying for Fun*

Indie-pop shaped by a drummer's sense of punctuation and propulsion, then filtered through a spirit of flirtatious pessimism that Katharine Seggerman spells out in lyrics like "I don't want to get to know you/That's when things get messy" and "You've got an uncanny way of making me feel like this is the end." Nicky Steves' synths add an appropriately carnivalesque fluorescence, especially when they go oo-ee-oo-ee-oo.

Muja Messiah, *Lucky Bastard*

Less than a minute in, Muja strings "nun," "young," "Hmong," "tongue," and "sprung" together just in case you forgot he's the Twin Cities' finest pure rhymers. Basking in his casual virtuosity, he rarely raises his voice or loses his cool even when he's promising to send you "golfin' with the dolphins" or bragging "my lawyer court-side/your lawyer is court-appointed."

Niice., *Never Better*

Bad relationships, family trauma, self-hatred—all the aggravated emotional fuel for great pop-punk is in this trio's tank. Roddy Gadeberg's full-throated vocals are neither whiny nor bullying, and over six songs stretched out to a whole 14 minutes,

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MUSIC



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they trick up their arrangements without ever stalling the momentum. And since this is Minnesota pop-punk, they complain about the weather. Twice.

Nur-D, *Songs About Stuff*

True to his name, Nur-D might sprinkle his rhymes with the sort of pop-culture references that get you shoved against middle-school lockers—"20 Cha" is basically the *Dungeon Master's Guide* set to music—but nasal cliché is not his style. And though he's anti-macho he doesn't project a false lack of confidence: As he boasts on "Tyler Breeze" (oh, yes, he's obsessed with wrestling too), "I'm flip-pin' gorgeous," while a line like "I wear XXL because a large is too tight" comes off like a boast.

Prim Woes, *Sun Dunk*

Swaddled in cozy blankets of reverb and vocal harmony, with a guitar that sometimes ventures out cautiously from the fold to make a catchy little point, these three endearing tracks waft among styles without committing to any—a little girl-groupy without the brashness sometimes, a little countryish without the twang at others.

Psalm One, *Flight of the Wig*

Cristalle Bowen aka Psalm One aka Hologram Kizzie has spent a lot of time in the club and a lot of time online, and she reports back from both with a wicked flair and an infinite amount of ungiven fucks. She splits her time these days between here and her hometown of Chicago, but you think we're not gonna claim a record this good as local?

Dua Saleh, *Nur*

This Sudan-born, St. Paul-raised singer-rapper's cottony coddling of words is a stylish exercise in false modesty that shrugs, "Oh, this old phrase" while strewing as glitzy a string of syllables as "I'll spit on silk to find the silver in the slivers in your

couch," and Psymun's production—dense not murky, moody not ominous, couldn't match Dua better. The year's deepest 20 minutes of Minnesota music—and some of its most playful.

Sass, *Chew Toy*

Riffs? Who needs 'em? Stephanie Jo Murck's headlong indie rock is built on nervous yet engaging little guitar parts that pace in ruminative circles before branching out into full melody lines or amping up into distorted chords for the big chorus. That, my friends, is what we critics call "a sound."

Shredders, *Great Hits*

A gang of four who started out as not-exactly-Doomtree in 2017, P.O.S, Sims, Lazerbeak, and Paper Tiger sound like their own entity on album #2. Does "hits" mean "songs you hear on the radio"? Maybe. Could it also mean "fists walloping your face and solar plexus"? Ow, yes. Ow.

Velvet Negroni, *Neon Brown*

Jeremy Nutzman's voice, sensual but not overtly seductive, shapeshifts as it flows, often aching upward soulfully, sometimes dissipating in deep echo or electronic crackles. All around him, squiggles of friendly ghosts peek from the shadows, beats skitter away into dark corners of a track like insects when you flick on a light switch, and the squeak of guitar strings reminds you this was all crafted by humans.

Katy Vernon, *Suit of Hearts*

Vernon's uke is just one element in an expansive and ambitious sound (there's even a trumpet!) that suits (sorry) the sympathetic wisdom she bestows when addressing her daughter on "In Your Shoes (For Daisy)," looking backward on "Somebody's Daughter's Daughter," or just assuring whoever's listening that "You may never save anyone's life in this life but your own/But that's more than most others can." **B+**

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): When comedian John Cleese was 61, his mother died. She was 101. Cleese testifies, "Just towards the end, as she began to run out of energy, she did actually stop trying to tell me what to do most of the time." I bet you'll experience a similar phenomenon in 2020—only bigger and better. Fewer people will try to tell you what to do than at any previous time of your life. As a result, you'll be freer to be yourself exactly as you want to be. You'll have unprecedented power to express your uniqueness.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Renowned Taurus philosopher Bertrand Russell was sent to jail in 1918 because of his pacifism and anti-war activism. He liked being there. "I found prison in many ways quite agreeable," he said. "I had no engagements, no difficult decisions to make, no fear of callers, no interruptions to my work. I read enormously; I wrote a book." The book he produced, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, is today regarded as a classic. In 2020, I would love to see you Tauruses cave out an equally luxurious sabbatical without having to go through the inconvenience of being incarcerated. I'm confident you can do this.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): It's common to feel attracted to people because of the way they look and dress and carry themselves. But here's the problem: If you pursue an actual connection with someone whose appearance you like, there's no guarantee it will turn out to be interesting and meaningful. That's because the most important factor in becoming close to someone is not their cute face or body or style, but rather their ability to converse with you in ways you find interesting. And that's a relatively rare phenomenon. As philosopher Mortimer Adler observed, "Love without conversation is impossible." I bring these thoughts to your attention, Gemini, because I believe that in 2020 you could have some of the best conversations you've ever had—and as a result experience the richest intimacy.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): Mystic poet Rumi told us the kind of person he was attracted to. "I want a trouble-maker for a lover," he wrote. "Blood spiller, blood drinker, a heart of flame, who quarrels with the sky and fights with fate, who burns like fire on the rushing sea." In response to that testimony, I say, "Boo! Ugh! Yuck!" I say "To hell with being in an intimate relationship with a trouble-maker who fights with fate and quarrels with the sky." I can't imagine any bond that would be more unpleasant and serve me worse. What about you, Cancerian? Do you find Rumi's definition glamorous and romantic? I hope not. If you do, I advise you to consider changing your mind. 2020 will be an excellent time to be precise in articulating the kinds of alliances that are healthy for you. They shouldn't resemble Rumi's description. (Rumi translation by Zara Houshmand.)

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): The 18th-century comic novel *Tristram Shandy* is still being translated, adapted, and published today. Its popularity persists. Likewise, the 18th-century novel *Moll Flanders*, which features a rowdy, eccentric heroine who was unusual for her era, has had modern incarnations in TV, film, and radio. Then there's the 19th-century satirical novel *Vanity Fair*. It's considered a classic even now, and appears on lists of best-loved books. The authors of these three books had one thing in common: They had to pay to have their books published. No authority in the book business had any faith in them. You may have similar challenges in 2020, Leo—and rise to the occasion with equally good results. Believe in yourself!

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I'll present two possible scenarios that could unfold for you in 2020. Which scenario actually occurs will depend on how willing you are to transform yourself. Scenario #1. Love is awake, and you're asleep. Love is ready for you but you're not ready for love. Love is hard to recognize because you think it still looks like it did in the past. Love changed its name, and you didn't notice. Scenario #2. Love is awake and you're waking up. Love is ready for you and you're making yourself ready for love. Love is older and wiser now, and you recognize its new guise. Love changed its name, and you found out. (Thanks to Sarah and Phil Kaye for the inspiration for this horoscope.)

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Renowned Greek sculptor Praxiteles created some famous and beloved statues in the fourth century B.C. One of his pieces, showing the gods Hermes and Dionysus, was displayed inside the Temple of Hera in Olympia. But a few centuries later an earthquake demolished the Temple and buried the statue. There it remained until 1877, when archaeologists dug it out of the rubble. I foresee a metaphorically equivalent recovery in your life, Libra—especially if you're willing to excavate an old mess or investigate a debris field or explore a faded ruin.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Over a period of 74 years, the Scorpio philosopher and author Voltaire (1694-1778) wrote so many letters to so many people that they were eventually published in a series of 98 books, plus nine additional volumes of appendixes and indexes. I would love to see you communicate that abundantly and meticulously in 2020, Scorpio. The cosmic rhythms will tend to bring you good fortune if you do.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Picasso was one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. He was also the richest. At the end of his life, experts estimate his worth was as much as \$250 million, equivalent to \$1.3 billion today. But in his earlier adulthood, while Picasso was turning himself into a genius and creating his early masterpieces, he lived and worked in a small, seedy, unheated room with no running water and a toilet he shared with 20 people. If there will be ever in your life be a semblance of Picasso's financial transformation, Sagittarius, I'm guessing it would begin this year.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Let's get 2020 started with a proper send-off. According to my reading of the astrological omens, the coming months will bring you opportunities to achieve a host of liberations. Among the things from which you could be at least partially emancipated: stale old suffering; shrunken expectations; people who don't appreciate you for who you really are; and beliefs and theories that don't serve you any more. (There may be others!) Here's an inspirational maxim, courtesy of poet Mary Oliver: "Said the river: imagine everything you can imagine, then keep on going."

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): In a poem titled "The Mess-iah," spiritual teacher Jeff Foster counsels us, "Fall in love with the mess of your life. . . the wild, uncontrollable, unplanned, unexpected moments of existence. Dignify the mess with your loving attention, your gratitude. Because if you love the mess enough, you will become a Mess-iah." I bring this to your attention, Aquarius, because I suspect you'll have a better chance to ascend to the role of Mess-iah in the coming weeks and months than you have had in many years.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Comedian John Cleese believes that "sometimes we hang onto people or relationships long after they've ceased to be of any use to either of you." That's why he has chosen to live in such a way that his web of alliances is constantly evolving. "I'm always meeting new people," he says, "and my list of friends seems to change quite a bit." According to my analysis of the astrological omens, Pisces, 2020 will be a propitious year for you to experiment with Cleese's approach. You'll have the chance to meet a greater number of interesting new people in the coming months than you have in a long time. (And don't be afraid to phase out connections that have become a drain.)

freewillastrology@freewillastrology.com
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CROSSWORD

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TOSSING BACK A FEW BEERS

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Cabrera of CNN
4 Crabs (and the like) nobody eats?
8 Exactly
14 My pronoun, for Merkel
15 Literary orphan sent to the Lowood Institution
16 How some grounders are fielded
17 Music genre that evokes an earlier time
19 Like sub-zero temperatures
20 "Actually, that's bullshit"
21 Fashion designer Saab
23 Pipe down?
24 "Golic and Wingo" chanel
25 Deadly African snake
27 He's a pig
29 Spanish province or its capital
30 Acting all emo
32 "Live at the Barbeque" rapper
33 Actor Felton of the Harry Potter movies
36 Where things stand today
40 Theses defenders: Abbr.
41 Thunder, on scoreboards
42 The tops
43 Strip off the Mediterranean
45 AI's is 13: Abbr.
46 Test cases?
52 Perfect
54 Fighting
55 "That's a good ___!"

- 56 More than you can count
57 Tanker's route
59 Entertaining lavishly
61 Highly decorated
62 Woman's name that means "pure"
63 Woody picture
64 Trash
65 Cumberbund, e.g.
66 Albuquerque-to-Lubbock dir.

Down

- 1 Eagle's landing pad
2 Atomic structure physicist
3 Felix V and Alexander V, e.g.
4 Site admin's concern, briefly
5 With a less neurotic personality
6 Amusingly odd
7 Old snap tone
8 ___ A. Bank
9 Paris-based arts org.
10 Get for a song
11 Original "Buffy" network
12 More in need of an ice pack
13 Met tragedy, say
18 Fix up a loose board
22 Certain style
26 "Tik Tok" singer
28 Strand with code
30 Hadley and Bradley on the Moon: Abbr.
31 Japanese dumplings
32 Like payments

- made with your cellphone, briefly
33 Bills from the government, e.g.
34 Private discussions
35 Operation specialists, briefly
37 Rain forest resident that resembles a zebra
38 National Radon Action Mo. sponsor
39 Very deadly
43 Really bother
44 Spritz things up?
46 Marc of the Toronto Raptors
47 Fetal positions
48 "Gimme"
49 Elba of "Cats"
50 Actress Davis
51 Wise guys
53 Author Madeline L' ____
58 "Shut Up 'n Play ____ Guitar" (Frank Zappa album)
60 Brick oven residue

Last Week's Answer

G	R	I	N	D	T	I	M	E	X	T	J	S
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Quickies

Do I really have to delete my exes' old nudes?

My significant other wants me to delete any NSFW pictures of my exes, but I don't feel comfortable with that. I don't have an emotional attachment to my exes or really look at these photos anymore, but I feel that old pictures saved on old computers aren't doing any harm and deleting them won't fix my partner's insecurity.

PERSONAL IMAGES CAUSING STRIFE

Accommodating a partner's irrational insecurity is sometimes the price we pay to make an otherwise healthy and functional relationship work, PICS, as I recently told another reader. But one possible work-around—one possible accommodation—is telling your insecure partner what they want to hear even if it isn't true. Telling a partner who is concerned about safety that you're using condoms with others when you're not isn't okay, of course, just as telling a potential partner you're single when you're not isn't okay. But telling a partner that you deleted photos you never look at on a password-protected computer they can't look at... yeah, that's a lie you don't have to feel too awful about telling.

I have a question about porn. In modern porn, anal on women is gaining popularity. I'm a fan of anal with my boyfriend. However, in porn, it seems like the gaping asshole is a thing, a sought-after thing, a desired thing. And I guess my boyfriend and I don't get it. We can get quite vigorous when we have anal sex, but MY butt hole never gapes open like that—my boyfriend assures me that when he pulls out, it goes back to its cute little flower-like effect. Why is the gaping asshole so popular? I promise this is not a frivolous question or just for titillation. We really do wonder: What gives?

GAINING ANAL PERSPECTIVE
ENTAILS SERIOUS QUESTION

It's funny how a chief fear about anal sex—that your asshole would gape open afterward and poop would fall out while you walked down the street—became eroticized. (The asshole gaping open part, not the poop falling out part.) Did I say funny, GAPESQ? I meant predictable. Because a big part of the collective human subconscious is always at work eroticizing our fears, and the gaping-open, just-been-fucked, completely “wrecked” asshole many people



Dan Savage

feared inevitably became something some people found hot. And as more people began experimenting with anal sex—as anal went mainstream over the last two decades—people realized that the anal sphincter is a muscle and the secret to successful anal intercourse is learning to relax that muscle. Situationally, not permanently. You could relax, get loose, gape after, post the video to a porn tube, and then tighten back up. Now, not everyone thinks a wide-open, gaping asshole is desirable. And not everyone, in the immortal words of Valerie Cherish, needs (or wants) to see that.

I'm a straight guy who loves the female body—the look, touch, and smell. I'm in my mid-30s, I've never had a serious relationship, and I don't know if I'm capable of falling in love. I'm exclusively into trans women, and I've kept it a secret because it's nobody's business. If I were in love, I'd make it public, but that hasn't happened. I can't help but feel like this is an addiction, and I'm ashamed of it. I'm sure I'm not the first straight guy who's into trans women who's written to you. Where do I go from here?

STRAIGHT AND STRUGGLING

While dating someone in secret isn't impossible, SAS, it rarely leads to long-term love. Being kept hidden because you're trans (or you're gay or you're big) and the person you're dating hasn't gotten over their shame about being attracted to trans people (or members of their own sex or bigger people)... well, it sucks to be someone's dirty secret. And a healthy trans (or gay or big) person—the kind of person you might be able to fall in love with—isn't going to put up with that shit. So it's a catch-22: So long as you keep the women you date a secret, none of them are going to stay in your life for long. They'll be either so damaged you want them out of your life or not damaged enough to want you in theirs.

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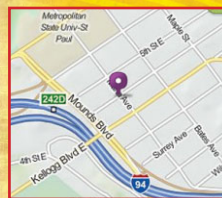


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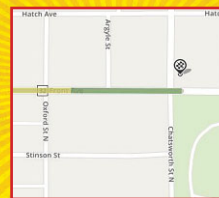
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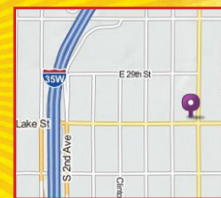
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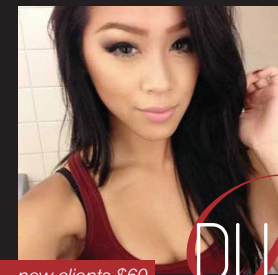
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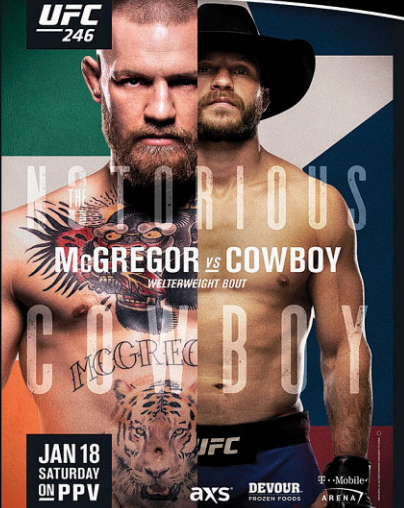


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<http://www.ecumenhospice.org/>

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<http://phylliswheatley.org/>

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